



American Citizen Bulletin
Message for U.S. Citizens
December 2011

Embassy Closings:

The U.S. Embassy will be officially closed on the following dates:

- Monday, December 26 - Christmas observed
- Monday, January 2 - New Year's observed
- Monday, January 16 - Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- Mon-Wed, January 23 – 25 - Chinese (Lunar) New Year

Special Notice to Overseas Voters to Act Now:

You must send in a **Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)** to your local election officials every year – even if you've previously voted overseas – and every time you change your name, physical address, or email address. Use the FPCA to request an absentee ballot, and to register to vote if you're not currently registered. The easiest way to fill out this form is to use the online tool available at www.fvap.gov - this walks you through the process based on your state's specific voting rules. Make filling out the FVAP every January 1st your new New Year's resolution!

The fastest way to get your absentee ballot is to request an **electronic ballot**. Depending on the specific rules of your home state, delivery may be made by fax, email, or online download. The online tool at www.fvap.gov will tell you which method(s) your state permits. We encourage you to use the Federal Voting Assistance Program website, www.fvap.gov, and request voting materials via internet/e-mail.

Social Security Announces 3.6 Percent Benefit Increase:

Monthly Social Security benefits for more than 60 million Americans will increase 3.6 percent in 2012, the Social Security Administration announced. The 3.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin for the nearly 55 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2012. To read more, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.

If you currently receive a Social Security check mailed from the Embassy each month, please consider opening a U.S. bank account so your payment can be directly deposited – it is safer and faster than waiting for a check to be mailed to you.

Happy Holidays
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